

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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MY ELM TREE.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BY AUGUST BELL.

Every night against my chamber eaves
I can hear the elm tree's branches swinging;
In the dewy morn when birds are singing
From my window I can touch its leaves.

Dear old tree! Its bark is gnarled and rough,
Broad and high its stately boughs it reaches,
And by boughs and leaves sweet lessons
Teaches.

To my heart whose needs are sad enough.

When my dreams seem fleeing far from me,
Or when by some cruel falsehoods pressed,
Then I, looking out, find peace and rest
In the cool green depths of my elm tree.

Where the little birds build quiet homes,
Where the tiny dewdrops brightly nestle,
Where the summer breezes softly rustle,
And in flickering gold the sunshine comes!

How it braves the wintry storm and cold!
How it ever grows up toward Heaven,
Nothing daunted, though so slow is given
Year by year new stature to uphold!

And its tender leaves, in crowds that yearly
Come out growing greenly in the sun,
And drop meekly when their work is done,
Have a meaning that may touch me nearly.

I, who often feel impatient grief
That my great dreams come so slow to me
Like the long, long growing of the tree,
What if I am only like a leaf?

God who knows may shortly cut the thread
Of this life before it reaches farther,
Choosing others for His great tree rather,
While like millions I'm unknown and dead.

But I think there's nothing here that grieves,
He holds all within His love so gracious,
Every little deed to Him is precious,
It is sweet to number with His leaves!

On Board the Imperial.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BY BELLA Z. SPENCER.

I shall never forget that night upon the broad, shining waters of the Mississippi! The weary day had gone by, and with the evening shades, revived our flagging spirits, huring us to the pilot-house for social chat and music, spite of the danger lurking among the green leaves and blowing flowers upon the banks.

I well remember the picture as I took it then in my eye. The pilot stood at his wheel, apparently engaged in the management of the *Imperial* as she steamed royally over the flashing waves; but there was a half smile upon his lips, which betrayed a hearty enjoyment of the gay valley of his shooting around him. Below us the water glowed with ruddy gleams of light, such as only can light up the bosom of the Mississippi to sunset radiance. Purple shades crept in with the gold and crimson along the green banks, and the monotonous, yet musical splashing of the waves under the vessel, helped to lull the romance of our nature beyond the limits of total reticence.

We were a large party, and the little pilot-house was full. The captain sat at my side, holding the guitar which he had brought up from the cabin, with exemplary patience, while the first clerk finished a story he was relating to an officer's pretty young wife opposite. The others listened in amusement, or looked out upon the scene, as best pleased them. When it was ended, a song was called for unanimously.

I did not feel like singing, yet the sweetness of the hour made me oblige. I took the guitar and accompanied myself in a gay little song from "La Traviata," which met with such signal success as to seal my doom for the remainder of the evening. Duets, trios, and quartettes followed, and we entered into the spirit of what we sang, after awhile, most heartily. The sun was gone; the night deepened, and the moon rose calm and white over the still earth. Out upon the night, mingled with the rush of the waves, floated the voices, and the woods caught the echoes to send them back faintly, when we swept by a hill in our steady statefulness. By and by, I played only, while others sang, listening with all my soul alive and revelling in sweet sounds—listened till my arms weary and my fingers fell limp among the strings of the instrument.

"Thank you, Miss," came from the pilot with a deep breath of satisfaction, as the music ceased. "I have passed many a night on this river, and have seen beautiful scenes; but no night has ever been happier and more beautiful than this. If I never see another, I shall not regret the pleasure this gives me."

Something in his last words struck me as sad, almost prophetic. As we made a curve round a bend in the stream, the moonlight fell full upon his face, and I saw that it was earnest, his dark eyes dreamy and sad. Yet as his glance met mine he smiled cheerily, and again glanced at the guitar.

"It is a little thing to give so much pleasure."

"Our chief pleasures come from little things often," I said.

"Yes. After all, though, it only speaks through some kindly hand—not of itself. A moment since, it almost brought tears to my eyes. Now it lies mute and lifeless," and he sighed.

Here a merry laugh rang out, and the captain's blue eyes turned regally upon the browned pilot.

"Romantic and sentimental, as I live! Why, Powell, what has come over you, man? You are not often guilty of such weakness."

"I guess it's the influence of the company I'm in," answered Mr. Powell, with a laugh.

"To be sure," broke in the pretty little creature opposite, whose soldier husband waited her at Memphis. "You forgot, captain, that the lady by your side is a 'Story Writer.' Oh, my! we must all look out, or the first thing we know, we shall all be in print."

I laughed, perhaps was guilty of a slight blush, but thought to myself that they need not be afraid. Alas! that fair young creature little thought how soon the public prints would take her name and hear it far and wide over the country, or under what mournful circumstances.

"Can you tell stories as well as you write them?" asked the captain, turning to me.

"I do not know. The little ones at home used to think so, when they gathered about me in the twilight."

"They are good critics, and I have a childish fondness for stories myself. Ladies and gentlemen, I vote for a story. What say you? Something impromptu and original?"

"Yes, a story, a story," ran through the group, and I was placed. It did not please me wholly, to be top up as an "entertainer General" to the party, but I had nothing better to do, and the next moment smiled at the momentary feeling of annoyance the request had called up.

"I will gratify you on one condition," I said. "You are to believe what I shall tell you religiously, and at the same time acquit me of any element of superstition in my nature. I shall tell you a very marvelous story, if any at all."

"Oh, of course we will believe you, and not think you a bit superstitious. Marvelous stories are exciting. Pray let us have it at once."

The captain's tone was playfully mocking, but I leaned back in sober earnestness against the glass of the window, and began without preface, as the little incident drifted to my mind:

"I was quite a young girl when the event occurred which I am going to relate—perhaps not more than ten years of age. I lived in a little town in the country, who had come into our little town to attend a 'protracted meeting,' as it was called there. These 'meetings' generally lasted a week, two, and sometimes three, were added, if the excitement could be kept up—and now every available chamber was brought into use for the guests, until this interesting time should be over."

"I had been promoted from the nursery to a dear little white chamber of my own, but had to give it up to two young girls on this occasion, and share my sister's lower down the corridor. The door to it opened from the first landing above the main hall, and the light from the hall lamps lighted it brightly, so I was in no hurry to get up stairs on account of the gas being extinguished above."

"The family, save my mother, were all at church that night. She remained at home to tend a little baby brother who was ill, and as my father was absent, my thoughts constantly turned to her until the excitement in the church completely absorbed my childish interest."

"When it was over I stole away from the others, and as it was but a little distance, ran home and hid myself in the recess of a window, where I sat thinking over the scene and trying to get rid of the doleful sounds of weeping and lamentation which still rang in my ears."

"No one found me out. After awhile they went up stairs, and I could hear the merry little peals of laughter peculiar to young girls when three or four get together, floating down stairs now and then. Gradually all grew still. A servant came and put the lights out in the parlor. Still I sat where I was for some time—till every one except mamma was asleep, indeed; till I stole softly up to sister Lillie's room."

"As I opened the door a long line of light fell across the carpet. As hers was extinguished, I left the door open in order to see where to put my dress when I disrobed, and sprang thoughtlessly into bed without closing it. Lillie was tired and slept well. She had not heard me, as I moved about softly, and just as I was going to lay my head upon the pillow I bethought me of the door."

"Fellow," I said, and a little flash of annoyance came over me. I have left the door open and must get up again to close it. What a silly little girl!"

"One more moment and I should have been upon the floor had not an object attracted my attention which prevented the quick movement I contemplated. A large cat came upon the threshold, crossed the air of light and stood out in the darkness of the room. I then perceived that the creature had innumerable eyes, at which I gazed steadily in wonder, but with no thought of fear. I even laughed a little, amused at the 'fancy Tommy' which had so suddenly made its appearance. I could remember no cat in the neighborhood so large as this one; certainly none with so many eyes; and while I was puzzling myself over it the thing disappeared as quick as it came, though it did not go out at the door."

"As I went to the door to close it, I heard the sharp cry of my little pet brother from mamma's chamber on the first floor. She had let the nurse go home that night, and with the thought that she might want assistance with the sick child I went below. I found her sitting in a large chair looking Neddie to sleep again when I entered. I told her what I came for, and sat down beside the grate, in which a pleasant little fire glowed brightly. Pretty soon Neddie was dozing upon his bed, and mamma drew her chair nearer the grate. She seemed weary and sad, and, scarcely noticing my presence as she looked her head and forth gently."

"While I sat watching the flickering light upon her pale, sweet face, the soft, distinct pat of little feet fell upon my ears. I turned my head involuntarily and saw the great cat spring from the lower stair through the open door, and walk directly toward me. As it passed, I noticed that the color was gray, barred with black stripes around the body. Brushing against my side as it passed the creature walked up to the wall, turned around and lifting itself upon its feet rabbit fashion seemed to brace its back against the marble most determinedly."

"Filled with wonder and amazement, I took up the poker and touched it. To my astonishment it resisted me like a stuffed figure, without life or motion. A cry of surprise and consternation burst from my lips."

"Mamma! see what a strange cat! I saw it up stairs awhile ago. Now it is here. Just take the poker and see what an odd thing it is!" Mechanically she took the poker into her hand and touched it, an amused smile upon her lips. But the same instant a shade of surprise passed over her features, and she bent an earnest look upon it which doubly excited my wonder. My mother was no timid, visionary woman, but earnest, sound and practical. I could trust her face as I trusted God's beautiful sunshine, as an indication of gentle Nature's blessings and good will to man; therefore her swiftly changing features told me of alarm as well as surprise."

"In a moment she checked herself suddenly and leaned back in her chair."

"Child, go to bed! Why do you sit up so late? I ought at once to have sent you back, for you ought to have been asleep two hours ago."

"But the cat!" I said persistently. "Isn't it queer?"

"Queer! what can there be in a cat that can be called 'queer'?" My child, go to bed and trouble yourself no more about such silly things."

"I obeyed her from a habit never to hesitate in this—always to me pleasant—duty. I loved my mother fondly, and her word was law. But as I went up stairs it occurred to me that she sent me off merely to prevent my growing excited over a really mysterious thing. She had always taken pains to root all fear and superstition from our nature. I had often heard her say that nothing could pain her more than to see a child of hers growing up a coward, either morally or physically."

I had not more than reached the chamber before that strange thing—cat, or whatever it might be—was beside me. I heard it pat, pat, pat up the stairway, and then it touched my garments as it passed. You may not believe me, but I closed the door and went to bed, absorbed in thought of my strange visitor, but not at all frightened. Once or twice I looked out of my net to catch the gleam of those kindling eyes, but it was gone—at least it was not visible to me."

"On the following morning, I, of course, told the story to the others of the family, and got well laughed at for my pains. A vivid imagination had always been imputed to me, and in the face of all my fearlessness and freedom from superstition, they would insist upon it that I had been 'deep in some of my wild legends from the German, and that my imagination had played me a trick upon the strength of them.' Expostulations were vain; they only laughed the more. In despair I appealed to mamma, but she only shook her head and smiled. Thus best, I became proudly silent, till on the succeeding night, when the same 'vision' appeared to me. At the first glance I started up in bed and called out to Lillie. I had not expected to see it again, and the sight rejoiced me, as I thought it would prove that all was not attributable to my 'legends' and my 'imagination.'"

"Sister half rose upon her elbow, eager and trembling, but saw nothing, and fell back laughingly. I continued to talk fast, and try to point it out, until I grew excited and angry. She would not look, but only laughed the more, while I sat there in bed, looked at the strange,

twinkling, perplexing eyes, and wept with vexation."

"From that time forth my 'Ghost' was the pet joke of the household. I heard nothing else. They trilled me about it from morning till night, and usually my greeting upon leaving the bed was, 'Well, how's your ghost? Are his lordship's eyes as numerous and bright as ever?' Whereupon I would close my lips in proud disdain, and keep my own counsel. It came every night, invariably. No matter if the doors were shut or not. If I fell asleep without a glance from the bright eyes, I was sure to wake before morning and see them somewhere in the room. But what was stranger of all, those eyes disappeared one by one, till only a single orb remained. Suddenly, while I gazed at that, sparks seemed to fly from the outer circle of the fiery globe, and continued until it was gone, and there was no more to be seen. That was the last visit I ever received from the mysterious cat, and ends my story."

A little storm of applause followed the effort I had made, mingled with merry laughter and jesting. Only the pilot was serious enough to ask if anything strange happened after that in the family."

"Neddie died," I answered with a great sob swelling suddenly in my throat at the pain recalled by his loss. "After that, my beautiful mother, whom we laid to sleep beside him, and the great covered the little grave that held so much of our hope and joy. But if I talk this way you will think I am superstitious; so we will have something pleasant. Though I acknowledge myself powerless to solve the mystery of my cat's vision, I still insist that there must have been a natural cause for this singular occurrence, and will not think of it, save to amuse myself and others. Suppose, friends, we go down to the cabin, and have a game of whist or chess."

The proposition was accepted readily, and the party descended the stairs merrily. In leaving, Mr. Powell detained me to say good-bye, and express his thanks. A depth and earnestness in his voice thrilled me as he held my hand for an instant in his hard, rough palm."

"Thank you for your music and your story, miss. When you are sleeping, I shall remember as I drift along the stream, how kindly you have tried to amuse us, and it will help me to pass the lonely night. It will be lonely, for I am very unaccountably depressed this evening. I am not often sad—seldom foreboding."

"But are both to-night, I see. I dare say it arises only from the sweet soft beauty of the night, and the dangers that lurk among those fragrant thickets we may pass. There are many dangerous places."

"Yes, we can't tell when a pack of those soulless ghouls may pour a volley of shot and shell into us. But I am used to that, and scarcely think it troubles me. Don't let me detain you longer. Good night, and God bless you."

A smile was upon my lips as I went below, for I was really amused at what seemed a serious sentiment. Still, when I had time to think of it more, it impressed me to a restlessness I could not overcome. We played a game of whist after going to the cabin, then separated for the night, and it may have been only fancy, but I thought that there was more of earnestness than usual in our leave-takings, more of kindly interest and feeling expressed than on any other occasion. The gentlemen each shook hands with us, and the ladies left kisses upon each other's lips before entering their state-rooms. The pretty little wife of the young officer waiting at Memphis came up to me with a sweet, childlike manner that won my heart at once, putting her arms round my neck, and leaning a bright little head with a wealth of glossy tresses against my bosom."

"It makes me sorry to say good night," she said, with a soft little laugh. "I'm sure I don't know why. Perhaps it's only because I've been so happy this evening, and am not sleepy now. Besides, you know we shall get to Memphis tomorrow, and I may never see any of you again. This is the curse of travel. All the nice friends we meet, drift away from us, and that is the last we know of them, nine cases out of ten."

"You will find a good substitute for all you have met on this trip," I smilingly said, looking down at her till the quick blood leaped to her cheeks in crimson spots, and a glad light beamed from the blue eyes."

"Yes," softly and tenderly. "I shall find my own dear husband." Tone and words said: "All my world," in the frank utterance."

When she was sweetly sleeping hours later, I still sat inside of my state room door, but looking through it and out into the calm night. I could not sleep, and my restless wakefulness made me inexpressibly sad. The thousands of stars beaming from a clear sky above, were but as plying eyes bent upon the earth, now the scene of contention and war such as history had never recorded; the many crushed hearts whose hopes had gone out with the red tide of warm young blood upon many battle-fields. Even that river, could it yield up its secrets, would tell tales of sorrow and bereavement almost surpassing credulity."

A sudden grating sound made me look out towards the shore. The *Imperial* had landed for wood, and in a moment more, the crew had planted a blazing torch upon the lower deck, by

the light of which they worked steadily till the huge pile of dry lumber had disappeared."

Leaving over the guard, I watched the rough, unsmooth figures as they passed between me and the ruddy light, thoughts of that strange, wild scene in the "Fire-warehouse" passing through my mind. While I looked, a splash in the water just beneath me, called my attention to the spot, and I saw the figure of a man sit himself from the water to the deck. It might have been one of the crew, who had taken an impromptu bath; but it did not seem quite likely. There was a cautiousness and silence in his movements suspicious, to my the least, and he had glided from sight too quickly to satisfy me that all was right. All my restlessness had gone in a moment. Ideas and visions floated away. There was something for homeless action, and I went straight to the stewardess to wash and send her to the cabin."

Contrary to my expectation, she was sleepy and cross, uttering a groggy refusal to be "bothered with stupid white-fellow whims." So I went away, resolved to find the captain myself, and tell him what I had seen."

The *Imperial* was underway again, when I went out upon the guards. With steady clasp the ponderous wheels began to move, propelling us swiftly down the stream. In a few moments the captain passed up the guards to ascend to his room in the Texas, and as he neared me I greeted him with my brief story. He listened with attention, and went immediately below to institute a search; but nothing being found, he soon came back, called a little at what he evidently considered my womanly stupidity, and bidding me good-night a second time, bowed himself into obscurity."

The premonition of coming evil grew strong upon me—so strong that I was angry at the seeming indifference displayed by the captain. The sentinel still paced upon the lower deck, and the whole crew was there. Still I was elated and sat down upon the side of my berth in thought. That evil was near, I felt rather than feared. But the shape did not define itself in my mind. Speculation did not avail me in rendering the matter any clearer, as the hours sped by, and I should at length have retired, endeavoring to forget my restlessness, had not a singular odor penetrated my state-room just as I rose to disrobe."

Softly undressing my dress, I looked out and saw a thick cloud of smoke rising along the side of the *Imperial* from the lower deck. That instant, I knew that the vessel was on fire, but even then, paused to assure myself. By leaning over the guard, I could faintly see through the smoke, a red glare, and a line of flame leaping along a quantity of hay which was stowed away in large bales on deck. Near these were some barrels of oil which I remembered to have seen when visiting the machinery below, and this had taken fire. Though I had not passed the space of a minute, the terrible element was making rapid leaps toward the cabin, while the confusion on deck had become awful. The men shouted hoarsely, while the horses plunged in mad fright, screaming with almost human voices in their agony."

I have always thanked God for presence of mind during moments of danger, and it was not denied me in that awful time. In less than a minute I had thrust my purse into my bosom, dropped all superfluous portions of dress, and taken off my shoes. The next thing was to tie on a life preserver which hung by my berth, and then to run to the other state-rooms. I knew by the commotion that the inmates had been awakened, and it was now my purpose, having prepared myself to aid them all in my power."

The scene which met my gaze in the next moment beggars description. The state-rooms were vacated, the inmates rushing out into the cabin, pallid with fright, and giving vent to such screams as never before greeted my ears. The fatal truth had spread already, and the word "fire" quivered upon every lip. The gentlemen had rushed out also, without dressing, save in their pantaloons; and many were as feeble and helpless in their fright as the ladies. I saw at once that little help could be expected from them."

"Friends," I cried earnestly, "try to calm yourselves for a moment and act. Let each lady tie about herself the life preserver in their rooms. Do not try to save any baggage or articles of dress. Life is worth more than all these, and we must take to the water. Be quick, and do it without confusion. I will help you."

Some obeyed readily; others fell helpless to the floor, while a few rushed about wildly, screaming, not knowing which way to go. Amidst the clamor and confusion, I made myself understood sufficiently to give direction to their movements."

"Go to the stern of the boat and stand still. The fire is nearest the bow, and you cannot escape forward, even if they succeed in running in to the shore. Those who cannot swim will have to be taken off in the boats. But for your lives do not rush about so confusedly. You expose yourselves to the danger you would avoid."

All now burst through the door, and I hastened to find Mrs. Nelson, the officer's wife, whom I had missed in the excitement. She was lying upon the floor of her room in a deep swoon. To seize a life preserver, tie it around her waist,

I KNOW THAT I LOVE HER.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.
BY LILLIAN HOPE.

I know that I love her, I will not deny it.—
Really delicious love is by the way;
It's in her for you, Harry, to try it?
There is someone little Anabel Gray,—
I cannot believe that she's waiting for you, Hal,
She plays with her beauty as a child with a toy,
You'll believe that the girl can be true, Hal?
Isn't she worthy the asking, my boy?
What is the cause of your very fine color?
Wonder if speaking of her made you blush!
Sure the sweet Anabel cannot be diller
Than—What have I said that you tell me to
hush?
Now if you love her, I'm happy to know it,
If she'll be coaxed into loving you well—
Aye, but you have the disease, for you show it;
Glad am I, too, that she's cousin to Nell!
Go as I did to my dear little girl, Hal,
True, for the present I'm only a clerk,
Yet my poor heart is in such a mad whirl, Hal,
For her I am ready and willing to work.
"Charlie," her father said, ever so kindly,
"My daughter is pleasant, and pretty, and
good,
You love her, I'm willing, but do not love
blindly,
The cure that must come, is it well under-
stood?"
I've health and I've hope, sir, tho' never an
ace,
And, with her earnest words helping me on,
If she will come to me, bless her, I'll take her,
Feeling that life has then really begun.
"That is the spirit, my boy," said her father,
"Who, by the way, has a plenty of pelf,
I could assist you, but much would I rather
See in your strength to depend on yourself."
Aye, on myself, and how gently I'll guide her
O'er life's rough and tempestuous sea!
Never a shadow of ill shall betide her!
I love her, and oh! I am sure she loves me.
Herkiner, N. Y.

PROVING AN ALIBI.
(CONCLUDED.)WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY ERSEX.

PART II.

It was at Niagara that Flora first heard of Anthony's murder and of Charlie's arrest. For three weeks she had been journeying through Canada, and during that time she had received scarcely any letters, and had seen really no papers that would contain any mention of the affair. All this happened before the war, when daily news was by no means so important as now, so that although she might at Quebec or elsewhere on her trip have obtained the New York papers, it had never seemed to her as worth while. When they reached Niagara, however, her first inquiry was for letters, as it seemed to her very long since she had heard from her little girl. Several were handed to her, but the first one opened was that from her mother. Her little one was well; and after giving her this assurance, Mrs. Leroy went on to tell her daughter the gossip of the day, foremost among which was the recent news that Charlie Wentworth was committed for trial.

"You must have been very much shocked to hear of Mr. Anthony's murder," her mother wrote, "who would have thought that Charlie Wentworth would have been capable of such an act! But the evidence against him seems to be overwhelming; and I see by to-day's paper that the grand jury have found a true bill against him, and he is committed for trial at Scudport, in September."

As Flora read, the words seemed to reel and dance before her. All these weeks she had been thinking of Charlie. Night and day the remembrance of his tender words, his chivalrous devotion had haunted her, and long before this she had learned the secret of her own heart, and knew why it was that she had looked forward with such delight to returning to the city and seeing him once again. And now he was not there; he was no longer free to come and go as he chose, to meet her as an honorable man bearing an honorable name, but crushed down under a weight of infamy, a prisoner under this horrible accusation of murder! From the few words in her mother's letter she had no clue to when all this might have happened, and for one awful moment her brain reeled as she thought that it might perhaps be true that he had committed this crime, but then it seemed as if she could see those fearless blue eyes looking into hers, and she blushed with indignation at herself for supposing that open brow could bear the mark of Cain. If she had loved him before, she loved him ten thousand times more now, with the instinct of a true woman's heart; he was alone, sad and suffering, while she was far away. "Oh, my love," she murmured to herself, "to think that he is in prison, and I have not the right to comfort him!"

For a few moments she was almost stupefied with grief; then on a sudden, she roused herself with the thought that perhaps if she knew all the circumstances of the murder she might suggest some proof of innocence that no one had yet thought of, and without losing a moment, she hurried out of her room in search of Mr. Jackson, who was the elderly gentleman of the party. She could not find him till she had rung the bell in the parlor, and sent a waiter in search of him, then it seemed to be an age before he appeared. When he did come in he was impressively checked at Flora's changed appearance and frightful pallor.

"Good heavens! Mrs. Templeton," he exclaimed, "what has happened?"

Flora had never reflected on what might be inferred from her interest in this matter, but she could little enough just now for appearances or consequences.

"I have a letter from my mother," she said, "in which she tells me that Charlie Wentworth has been committed for trial at Scudport, and she could not tell me the news."

"I know, I know," said Mr. Jackson, "for the murder of Simon Anthony; a horrible affair, surely, and I never would have thought Charlie Wentworth could have done such a thing."

"Then you have seen it in the papers?"

"Yes, I was looking over the files of the Herald just now, and so came across it."

"Will you please send me all the papers that tell anything about it?"

"Certainly, certainly, my dear Mrs. Templeton; will you have them here?"

"No, in my room please."

"You shall have them directly."

"Thank you."

And as Flora walked slowly away, Mr. Jackson shook his head. He had discovered the young widow's secret, he thought, and knew now the reason why she had been so indifferent to all the attention she had received in their summer trip.

"I wonder which of them it is," he thought. "I've heard they were both attentive to her; it can't be Anthony, he was such a prig, it must be Charlie Wentworth's handsome face that has made the impression, poor thing! poor thing! Well, perhaps after all, it will come out that he did not do it."

In a few moments Flora had the papers in her possession and was devouring them eagerly, breathlessly, with eyes that seemed to seize the meaning of the words without waiting for the slow process of scanning every one, and a mind that grasped every point that bore upon his possible innocence. From the first discovery of the fact that the murder was committed in Scudport, and on the night before she left, Flora felt a glad, triumphant thrill, for she knew then that he was guiltless, and after that she could go on to the details with a heart, heavy enough it is true at thought of all he had suffered, but full of a strong, deep hope and confidence in his final vindication.

Here was all the description of the examination before the grand jury. Flora's eyes filled with tears as she read how the prisoner came in looking very pale and seeming to suffer intensely, her brow contracted as she saw how he had declared his innocence and had not been believed, but her cheeks flushed to a deep crimson as she noted the comments of the reporter in his refusal to account for the manner in which he had passed that last evening. Here was the testimony of the servant who had heard the angry words between Charlie and his so-called victim, and the additional testimony of one of the young men who had been on the band platform that first afternoon at Scudport when Charlie had uttered that hasty threat after Anthony urged Flora to drive with him. Here too was the evidence of the medical man as to the fact that death had resulted from those wounds, and that they must have been inflicted with Wentworth's cane; then the case was identified by one or two fellow boarders at the Beach House. And at last the landlord described the discovery of the body on his return from a visit to a friend, and how he had called a waiter and had it quietly conveyed into the hotel; this fixed the time of the murder, for it was before one o'clock.

As Flora read that her eyes flashed with a light of sudden hope, and she dropped the paper with a cry of gladness. "Then I can prove his innocence," she said, "for I was with him up to that time."

And then with a wildly beating heart she saw why it was that he had refused to account for that last evening, and realized with a thrice of intense devotion that as he had sworn to her, he was about literally to prove that he would die sooner than betray any trust which she had placed in him.

What now to her were detractions or animadversions or conventionalities? she could prove that he could not have committed this foul crime, and she would save his life even if it cost her her reputation to do it. The frowns and sneers of all the world were as nothing to her, now that this terrible reality had brought her face to face with life and death, and made her feel that the safety of this man was more to her than anything else on earth.

For some moments she was so dazzled by the revelation of feeling in this new thought, this glorious consciousness of his noble devotion to her, that she forgot that she had not yet learned all that it was necessary for her to know, then with a sudden recollection she picked up the paper and read the closing sentences of the report:

"All the circumstances of this atrocious murder seem peculiarly painful. The prisoner is a young man of high connections, who will involve a most respectable family in his disgrace, while his victim seems to be entirely without near relatives, and his sudden death has left his affairs in considerable confusion. Advantage has been taken of this, we understand, by some designing persons to draw out large sums in bank, by checks now supposed to be forged, suspicion points to his servant, a certain Thomas Brown, who, it will be remembered, availed himself of the confusion consequent on the murder to rob his master of various valuable articles of jewelry and a considerable amount of money. A warrant has been issued for this man's arrest, and it is hoped he will be long secured. The trial of Charles Wentworth is fixed for the second Wednesday in September."

"What, so soon?" Flora faintly gasped as she read these last words, "the second Wednesday in September, that must be next week," for like most ladies Flora had very little idea of the exact day of the month. "What day is to-day?" Tuesday. And after looking for the last passage on file she found the date—"The seventh; the month then came in on Wednesday. Great heavens! the trial is to-morrow!" She started to her feet with an actual cry of anguish as she made this discovery. "To-morrow! and I am five hundred miles away!"

For one moment she was actually stupefied with horror. "To-morrow! oh, my love! my love! if I should be too late to save you!"

And then with sudden resolution Flora roused herself to the necessity of immediate action, and faced the duties of the hour with that courage and resolution which were two of her noblest qualities.

In a few moments she was in the parlor again, and had sent for Mr. Jackson once more. They had reached Niagara just at dusk, and now, as Flora stood waiting impatiently for the appearance of the kind old gentleman who was, as it were, the head of the gay party of friends, she noted that it was quite dark outside, and just before he came in the waiters began to light the gas. This time Flora was a little more composed than before. She knew the worst, and saw plainly what must be her line of conduct, and she felt a courage and hope in the very fact that action was possible.

"Ah! Mrs. Templeton, ready for tea already?" Mr. Jackson said as he came forward.

"No—that is, I had not thought of tea," replied Flora. "Mr. Jackson, I sent for you to say that I must have tea at once."

"Leave here!—what, to night?" exclaimed Mr. Jackson in blank astonishment.

"Yes, in the first train that will take me east, whenever that goes."

"There is one at nine o'clock, but dear me, you can't go at night, and alone."

"Yes, I can and must," replied Flora. "It is a matter of life and death."

"Blasphemy, my dear Mrs. Templeton!—this is very sudden," said Mr. Jackson, dropping into a chair. "I hope it is no bad news about your mother or child."

"No; they are very well indeed, Mr. Jackson. I owe it to you, for your constant kindness to me, to give you my reason. I must go to Scudport with all the speed that is possible, for I can prove that Mr. Wentworth is innocent."

"You, Mrs. Templeton?"

"Yes. If you have read the details of the examination before the grand jury, you have seen that Mr. Anthony must have been murdered before one o'clock at night. Now, Mr. Wentworth was with me until that time," and Flora could not repress a blush as she uttered the words.

"There, there! Well, I'm delighted to think he is innocent. But, Mrs. Templeton, why should you trouble yourself to make this journey? Of course there were other people who knew where he was that night."

"No, Mr. Jackson; we were alone together." And the good old gentleman averted his eyes with a look of pain, as he noted the deep crimson that dyed Flora's cheeks as she made this confession.

Flora caught the expression and hurried to an explanation.

"We were out sailing, and the wind died down. Mr. Jackson, you know me well enough to have confidence in me, I am sure. We were unavoidably detained out until that hour, and since the time that he was arrested he has refused to tell where he spent that fatal evening, for fear of compromising me. He has been willing to die a horrible death, under a false accusation, rather than to cause me a moment's embarrassment."

"He's a brave fellow!" cried Mr. Jackson, springing up, "and you're a noble woman, Mrs. Templeton."

"You know it all now, Mr. Jackson. The trial is fixed for to-morrow, and, with the utmost speed of travelling, I may come too late. Oh! what must be the thought of me, that I have never come before! To think that I have been away enjoying myself, while he has been suffering all this shame, when a word from me would have saved him!"

"But you will save him yet, Mrs. Templeton—you will save him yet," said Mr. Jackson kindly. "I see now the necessity for your immediate departure, and I will not oppose it; more than that, I will go with you as far as New York."

This kind offer Flora would have opposed. She knew that Mrs. Jackson was very much of an invalid, and exceedingly dependent on her husband, but the kind old gentleman would not hear to any other arrangement, more than that he undertook to shield Flora from all remark. The party of friends were to be informed simply that she had received bad news, which obliged her to leave at once, and her departure was to be so managed as to save her the trial of all leave-taking.

It was all arranged as she would have wished. Flora had a cup of tea in her room, and as her things had never been unpacked, she had nothing to do but wait with intolerable impatience for the time to arrive when she might feel that she was at last beginning the journey that was to take her to the rescue of this noble young man whom she so loved.

Nine o'clock came at last, and Mr. Jackson and Flora were whirled away through the darkness, for it seemed to her impatient heart that the utmost speed of the express train was but tediousness compared to the instantaneous flight she would have made to that dark jail at Scudport.

There the prisoner sat alone in his gloomy cell, counting the slow moments of the last evening before his trial, as he had counted the dreary seconds since his arrest. Three weeks of imprisonment and suffering had changed him very much, for Charlie had suffered not only the humiliation and horror of his trial, and the anticipation of his almost inevitable doom, but also from the anguish of believing that Flora was utterly indifferent to his fate. As he had told her, he would die rather than betray her; but as day after day had passed without one line from her of gratitude or sympathy, his heart had grown heavy with a despair that made death seem after all but a lesser evil than a life without hope. He loved Flora with all the energy of a passionate and faithful nature, he had acknowledged this himself before he parted with her, and now he was ready to give up everything for her, even life itself; but she must be a cold, cruel, heartless coquette, that she could thus desert him in his misery. Sometimes he had tried to think this, but then the remembrance of the tone of her voice as she bade him good-by, the earnest look of her eyes as they met his, would thrill him with a conviction of her truthfulness and love, and wild hope that she, too, had responded to his love. Then he would think, as he recalled the noble beauty of her countenance, and remembered all that he knew of her lovely character, that this woman was worth dying for, and he would feel almost with exultation, that when she realized that he had died to save her fair name from the possibility of suspicion, she would know how much he had loved her, and perhaps weep over his untimely fate.

It never occurred to him that Flora might not hear of a trial which he knew had made a great sensation among all his acquaintances, and he could not account for her silence upon any supposition but her indifference; and yet she had been very kind to him, and he could not understand how it was possible for her, with all her nobility of nature, to desert even a friend in the hour of sorrow. No! He would not believe her capable of anything that was not lovely and right, he would be faithful to his belief in her to the last moment of his life, and when that inevitable came, and which he had tried to teach himself to contemplate with unflinching courage, his last thought should be of her. She might be indifferent to him; she might think it her duty to herself and her little daughter to permit this sacrifice for the sake of her name, but he would love her to the very last, and die as he had promised her, to prove his devotion.

And yet that idea of death was not attractive

to this handsome and healthy young man, the silence and darkness of the grave, and that, too, a dishonored grave, were unutterably horrible; and the contemplation of that awful death at the hangman's hands, would curdle his blood with a dread he could not control.

He might be brave as Douglas and Chivalrous as Sidney; but to prove his devotion in this way by enduring a felon's fate, required surely a greater degree of moral and physical courage than any deed related in the romances of old. And yet this young man, who a few weeks ago had seemed in no wise different to every other handsome and well-dressed society man, was capable of a heroism at which even the brave heart of a Bayard might have recoiled in terror. Life, and name and fame, which are more than life, he was about to sacrifice to save a woman's honor, and prove the depth and sincerity of a love that was perhaps after all unrequited.

It must not be supposed that in all these weeks Charlie had been wholly without the consolation of friends; but most of those who intended to comfort him, only tormented him with their incessant entreaties to him to exculpate himself. Indeed the temptation to betray Flora and save himself was perpetual. His father, who had been with him from the first, was firmly convinced of his son's innocence, and who had tried prayers, commands, threats, and entreaties to induce him to tell him how he had spent that fatal night. It was all in vain. Charlie suffered horribly by persisting in his refusal to obey his father's wishes, but under all he remained silent. He was kind, respectful, tender, in view of his father's evident suffering, but he was obdurate on that one point, his refusal to give any clue to the proving of an alibi. After one of these interviews, when he had seemed doggedly obstinate, and his father had left him in evident despair, poor Charlie would fling himself down on his hard bed, and murmur Flora's name, as if in that alone he found the courage and strength to continue the horrible struggle.

Then his lawyer, Mr. Putnam, who was an old friend of his father's, tried his best to induce him or entrap him into a confession. He employed artifice, coaxing, shrewd questioning, all in vain. Charlie guarded the secret of that night far more desperately than he would have guarded his life. Every representation of the horrors of his fate and the disgrace of his name had been made in vain. Charlie had listened with calm courage to the details of death by hanging, and with regard to the future, had adhered to the unswerving belief that some day the true murderer would be discovered, and his innocence vindicated. His friends at last were almost in despair, but one last resource might yet be tried; and while Charlie sat alone, and almost worn out with long suffering and the anticipation of all the trials of the morrow, they were approaching him with one last temptation.

He was roused from his gloomy reverie by the sound of footsteps in the hall; it was late, and he wondered who could be coming to see him at that hour. He was not long in doubt. Another moment and the door was unlocked and the jailer entered, followed by his father. Behind his father there was a little shrouded figure. Charlie started up in surprise; there was a faint cry, and his young sister was in his arms.

"Susie, Susie, my dear child, how came you here?"

Charlie glanced half reproachfully at his father as he spoke. It had been agreed between them that this, his only sister, should not be brought into this place of horror, unless after the rendition of a fatal verdict, she came to see her brother for that last time on earth. But Mr. Wentworth, in the extremity of his despair at his son's obstinacy, had thought to try this last means of prevailing upon him to speak. Charlie's mother had long been dead; and his father knew that he loved his little orphan sister with rare fondness; he hoped much, therefore, from her entreaties.

"I know, Charlie," said Mr. Wentworth, replying to his son's look, "I half promised that Susie should not be brought to this horrible place if we could help it; but she has come to beg you, for her sake, to save yourself from the horrors of a murderer's doom, and her from the inheritance of a dishonored name."

"Oh! yes, Charlie; dear, dear Charlie, tell me all about it, won't you?" pleaded Susie.

"My darling sister," said Charlie, mournfully, "are you, too, going to subject me to the pain of refusing what you ask? Oh, Susie, this is my last night before the trial; think, then, how much I have suffered, and spare me the anguish of listening to useless entreaties."

"Then you won't let us save you! oh, dear Charlie, I am only a poor simple girl, and I don't know what to say; but I would beg you, on my knees, if it would do any good, to tell us where you were that night."

"It is no use," he said, "the story of that evening must die with me."

"Oh, my son! my son! why, why do you persist in your fatal obstinacy?" groaned Mr. Wentworth—while Susie only wept in mute despair.

Charlie started up and paced across his cell. "My God!" he moaned, "this is too much!"

"Oh, Charlie," sobbed Susie, "if you love me, if you respect our father's honorable name, if you care for our dear mother's memory, tell us this secret and let us save you!" And she dropped on her knees before him, and clasped her hands in desperate entreaty.

Charlie's own eyes filled with tears, and he raised his sister in his arms.

"Susie," he said, "oh, Susie, you ought to come here to console me—and you only torture me."

"Forgive me, darling brother—but oh think what there is at stake! Can I ever look up, do you think, at my father and smile, after you are—"

"Hush," said Charlie, gloomily, "that is the word. But, Susie, do you believe me innocent?"

"Certainly I do," exclaimed Susie. "Oh, Charlie, I believe in your innocence, as I do in Heaven's."

"Then surely one day it will appear, the true murderer will be discovered, my memory will be vindicated, and our name will be freed from stain."

"But you, oh, Charlie! it will be too late to save you!"

"Perhaps so; but I shall have died the death of a brave and loyal gentleman. Yes, Susie, although the manner of my death may be most ignominious, I tell you I shall die as truly and courageously as if I fell like our grandfather fighting for the flag of our nation, and in the fore front of an honorable battle!"

A passing sentimentality fit up Charlie's pale face, and gave to his blue eyes a lustre of immortal beauty. Susie and his father looked at him with yearning admiration. And even the jailer felt a strange conviction of his innocence.

"Now urge me no more," said Charlie, after a few moments' pause; "I tell you I should be brave and culpable were I to betray a secret I have sworn to keep. My dear sister, let me have a little comfort in these few minutes we can be together."

Something in the melancholy earnestness of his appeal touched both father and sister, they said no more on the fatal subject, but did all they could to comfort him in the short remaining time they were permitted to be together. When the dark doors were closed upon them, Charlie flung himself on his bed and great sobs convulsed his frame. He had realized that last temptation, but his sister's tears had shaken him more than anything yet, and the mute appeal of her last sad look had struck to his heart with a more eloquent entreaty than any words—

"Oh! Flora! Flora!" he cried. "Will she ever know what my devotion to her has cost me? And yet, and yet she is worth it all, she trusted herself to me, and if it is God's will I will die even that horrible death rather than betray her!"

Poor Charlie, his heart was very innocent and loyal, and when he had knelt in his last supplication to the God of justice that night, he slept afterwards the calm, sweet sleep of youth and an untroubled conscience.

The next day the court room at Scudport was crowded to suffocation by an eager throng desirous of being present at this most interesting trial. The presiding judge was Mr. Dalton, Flora's uncle. He felt the deepest sympathy with Charlie's unfortunate father, and for Charlie himself had always had so much friendly interest that he regarded his position, now that he was to see him tried for his life as peculiarly painful, but not the less from all these considerations was he resolved to judge the case with the strictest justice, and no more mercy than he would have shown to the most wretched outcast. So that his face was very set and stern when he took his place that morning in the judge's chair. The prosecuting attorney was a sharp, shrewd man, resolved to make the best of a very pretty case, without fear or favor for any one. As for the prisoner's two counsel, Mr. Putnam and Mr. Gray, they both looked very grave, as both fully aware of the almost utter hopelessness of their client's cause.

Poor Charlie! who can ever guess what he suffered during that long, bright September day? He was very pale when they brought him in court, but his face had a noble look of calm resignation, and in his eyes there was the steady light of a high resolve. In answer to the judge's formal question as to whether he was guilty or not guilty, his unhesitating reply of "Not guilty" was pronounced in so clear and confident a tone that it seemed to all those present who believed in his innocence, that the very accent of those words ought to carry a conviction of his truth. Mr. Wentworth sat beside his son with an expression of hopeless suffering on his worn face that was perhaps harder for Charlie to bear than anything else. Yet the whole thing must have been inexplicably trying to his high spirit to sit there exposed to the gaze of all those rude eyes under the terrible accusation of murder, and with the evidence of his apparent criminality every moment growing stronger and more convincing.

For the case against him was overwhelming. Once more as before the grand jury, his long dislike to Anthony, his threats against him, and their last quarrel were proven, then came the account of the identification of the case, the finding of the body, and the proofs of the wounds on the prisoner's hands when he was arrested. In opposition to all this Charlie's counsel could bring absolutely no evidence but that of character; they had several witnesses of the best standing to testify to his high and noble qualities, and their own conviction of his innocence, but what could that avail against the terrible array of testimony against him?

The case was not entirely closed that day, and after many long hours of torture Charlie was remanded to prison. It had been worse even than he had thought it would be, the being brought in and out of court by the sheriff like a felon, and the horrible gloomy of his position, the weariness of the slow questions and cross-questions, all of which seemed only to prove his guilt still more plainly, and the almost intolerable pain of seeing his father's anguish. It needed all his faithful confidence in the goodness and justice of God, and the heroism of his devotion to Flora to sustain him through that long solitary evening, and enable him to meet the next day's ordeal with any fortitude.

It was evident to all when he came in court the next morning that suffering was telling fast upon him, for he looked haggard, almost despairing, and yet still not even now when the inevitable end was coming so fast would he save himself by breaking his word and betraying the trust that Flora had reposed in him.

The evidence on both sides was closed, and the prosecuting attorney made a short, brilliant but convincing speech to prove the prisoner's guilt, this was almost more than Charlie could bear, to hear himself deliberately denounced as a murderer, his motives given, his violent passion painted, his conduct misrepresented, and his name covered with eternal infamy. More than once when some expression was used that was peculiarly insulting, his father saw him clutch the side of his dock with a hand that grew white with the violence of the clutch, while his lips moved as if he must speak, then his father's heart for a moment lightened with the hope that even now he might vindicate himself, but it all died away as he dropped back in his seat with his face set in a look of rigid determination.

After this Mr. Putnam rose to say what he could in the prisoner's defence. It was little enough, but the old gentleman was doing his best, when there was a little bustle near him, and a messenger approached and handed him a note. He was annoyed at the interruption, and passed it over to Mr. Gray. The junior counsel tore it open, and read these words, hastily scrawled:

"Pray, let me speak to you at once. I can prove Mr. Wentworth's innocence."

"Flora! Flora! Flora!"

Mr. Gray changed color with delight, as he started up and forced the note on the attention of his senior. Mr. Putnam glanced at the contents, and turned a burning face to the surprised court.

"May I please your honor, an additional witness has just arrived. May I crave a moment's delay to bring him in?"

The permission was granted, and the good gentleman hurried out. He had used the masculine pronoun as usual, not knowing whether Flora could prove the fact herself, or give a due to being up some one else. Indeed, as he read the note, he scarcely knew who it was from, and it was only when he reached the small side room where she waited, that he realized that the lady who had written it was the pretty widow he had that summer casually met in society.

Flora was deadly pale and worn with long travelling. She had come directly from the station to the court without waiting for a moment's refreshment; and now that she had reached the end of her journey, she was so agitated that she could scarcely speak.

"Good God! Mrs. Templeton!" exclaimed Mr. Putnam, as he met her wild, questioning look.

"He is not condemned—I am not too late!" she gasped, as she sprang forward to meet him.

"No, no indeed! If you can save him, there is yet time."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Flora with inexpressible relief. "I was five hundred miles away when I heard it. I have travelled day and night. There was an accident last evening, I could not get a telegram sent, and I have been so afraid I was too late."

"No, my dear lady. But how can you help him? Do you know where he was that night?"

"Yes, Mr. Putnam. He was with me!"

"Ah! I see it all," said Mr. Putnam a little eagerly, as wishing to see the lady's confusion. "What a noble fellow! He would not listen to our entreaties to him to explain how he spent that night. We have tried in vain to obtain every clue to where he was. He would have died before he would have spoken. But it is all right now, as you are willing to tell this."

"Will you?" exclaimed Flora. "Do you think I care for appearances in a case like this? We were out sailing together, and were detained."

And in a few rapid words she told the story of that night. Mr. Putnam listened eagerly, and suggested at once that the man from whom they hired the boat could corroborate her statement. Flora told where he was to be found, and a message was despatched for Capt. Jones, while Flora returned with the lawyer to the court-room.

There had been much whispering and wondering at the lawyer's strange absence. Charlie had scarcely raised his head at the interruption, for he knew only one thing could save him, and that he regarded as impossible. The delay, therefore, only annoyed him, as prolonging his torture. His father, indeed, had looked up eagerly, and Mr. Gray had given him a reassuring nod, but the time was growing long, and the judge gave signs of impatience, when way was made through the crowd for the new witness, and to the astonishment of the wondering throng, Mrs. Templeton appeared on the stand.

Flora's face was radiantly lovely as she took her place, the color had come into her cheeks, and the light into her eyes, with the certainty that she could save her noble lover. As Charlie looked up at the bustle of her entrance, and saw before him the woman he so loved, the blood rushed to his face, and he started to his feet with a half-suppressed cry. All the sorrow that he had endured to his heart repaid in the rapture of the triumphant smile with which she met his gaze, and the glad, grateful look that shone out in her eyes through the tears that filled them, in sympathy for him.

Judge Dalton was intensely amazed; he looked on at her through his spectacles, then he looked over them, and finally he took them entirely off, and wiped them, as if he could not believe their evidence, that his niece, whom he had thought so far away, could suddenly appear here in the witness box.

The oath was administered to Flora amid a dead silence, and then Mr. Putnam addressed her.

"Will you be kind enough, Mrs. Templeton, to tell us where you were on the evening of the twentieth of August last?"

"I was out sailing with Mr. Wentworth," replied Flora, unhesitatingly.

Judge Dalton leaned forward almost as if he were about to speak in denial of the statement. Flora glanced up at him, and continued,

"I was staying at my uncle Judge Dalton's. He and my aunt were out at a dinner party at General Conrad's, when Mr. Wentworth came for me, so that I could not tell them of my absence. We took a boat from Captain Jones', and started about eight o'clock, intending to return by ten, but the wind died entirely down when we were about five miles from home. Mr. Wentworth was obliged to row home. There was only one thole pin on board, and he could use but one oar. It was very slow work. We did not reach the shore till after twelve."

"You are sure of the exact hour?" asked Mr. Putnam.

"Yes, sir; for I was exceedingly annoyed at being out so late, and looked constantly at my watch."

"I believe that will do," said Mr. Putnam, kindly, for he saw that Flora began to look very pale again under the pain of concentrated stare of all those eager eyes.

"One moment, if you please, Mrs. Templeton," interposed the prosecuting attorney. "Mr. Wentworth walked home with you, of course?"

"Yes, sir."

"And I suppose your friends at the house can corroborate your statement as to what time you reached there?"

Flora colored as she heard the question, and Charlie looked more pained than he had during all his own trial as he saw her suffering.

"No, sir," she replied, after a moment.

"There was no one up in the house."

"Ah! Well, now, can you tell what time it was when he left you?"

"Not quite one o'clock."

The attorney paused a moment, and Mr. Putnam claimed the recall of the landlord of the Beach House. He had already sent for him, and when he was placed on the stand he had his question all ready.

"Mr. Clark, will you please tell us what time it was when you brought the body of Mr. Anthony into the house?"

"A quarter before one."

"How do you know?" demanded the prosecuting attorney.

"Because I looked at the clock in the office when I carried the body in there."

"Now, Mrs. Templeton, will you be kind enough to tell us where Mr. Wentworth was at a quarter to one?" asked Mr. Putnam.

This time a deep crimson swept over Flora's pale cheeks, but she answered unhesitatingly, "In my room."

At this reply Judge Dalton looked down with a stern frown, and Charlie once again started to his feet.

"Ah, ha!" sneered the attorney. "And where were you?"

"Outside, sir, on the lawn," replied Flora, with cool dignity. "When I reached home I thought it not worth while to disturb my own, and Mr. Wentworth went into my room to get a chair by which to assist me to climb in at the window; while he was gone I looked at my watch, and it was just a quarter to one."

"Hum!" said the prosecutor. "And how comes it that none of these facts appeared before?"

"Because I have been away in Canada, and never heard of the trial till day before yesterday; and because Mr. Wentworth was so noble, that he would not subject me to the suspicion of an imprudence, even to save his life."

"Then the prisoner is a very particular friend of yours?" suggested the attorney, with a suspicious smile.

"This was too much, Charlie started up in his place again."

"My God, Judge Dalton," he exclaimed, "is not my innocence sufficiently proved to permit me to defend this lady from such insults?"

"The prisoner at the bar must respect the court," replied Judge Dalton, in a tone he in vain endeavored to make stern, but indeed his words were almost drowned in the murmurs of indignation against the attorney and admiration for Flora and Charlie.

"I think you may go now, Mrs. Templeton," Mr. Putnam said, offering her his arm when calmness was a little restored, and Flora went away with one more bright look of triumph at Charlie's now happy face.

The crowd in the court-room could hardly be restrained, and outside they would break out with cheers of delight as she made her way through them to the carriage.

"It will be all right now, Mrs. Templeton. You have saved him," said Mr. Putnam, gleefully, as he handed her in, "he will come and tell you so himself this evening."

Flora dropped back on the seat with a long sigh of relief as she drove away to her aunt's to astonish her with the strange story, and seek the rest she so much needed.

On his return to the court-room, Mr. Putnam had it all his own way. Captain Jones being put on the stand, testified that by reference to his book he found that one of his boats had indeed been out very late on the evening of the twentieth of August; how late he could not say, as she had gone out with a gentleman and lady early in the evening, and had not returned when he went to bed. One of the waiters of the hotel had come down next morning and paid him in the gentleman's name so handsomely that he had never thought of making any inquiries; neither had he thought much about who the gentleman was till this afternoon when he was sent for as a witness.

Mr. Putnam's speech this time was very short, but exceedingly to the point; he gave a brief outline of the facts of the case, spoke of Charlie's having left his home at home, pointed his anxiety to return on the lady's account, and described his having blustered his hands in the endeavor, and how this fact had been turned to his disadvantage. He dwelt at some length on his high character that ought to have placed him above this suspicion; spoke of his noble self sacrifice in refusing to compromise a lady even to save his life; and sat down amid enthusiastic applause.

His speech was brilliant enough, but if he had not said one word Charlie's cause would have been gained. As it was, the jury brought in a unanimous verdict of "Not guilty," without leaving the box. And as Charlie walked off a free man leaning on his proud and happy father's arm, the crowd went fairly wild in their enthusiastic cheers of the young hero.

There is little after this to add to my story. As Mr. Putnam had prophesied, Charlie went as soon as he was at liberty, to thank Flora for saving him; but when she came down into the dim parlor and he saw the glad light in her beautiful eyes, every word of gratitude he had intended to utter was forgotten, and he only stretched out his arms with the cry—

"Flora, Flora, my darling, come to me, and make happy the life you have saved."

Flora's reply is not recorded, but that interview must have been entirely satisfactory to all parties; for when an hour later they joined Judge and Mrs. Dalton, their faces were both so radiantly happy that all traces of what they had suffered seemed to have vanished entirely.

Only one thing after this remained to make Charlie's vindication complete, and that was the discovery of the real murderer. This took place very shortly afterwards when Thomas Brown was arrested; various trifling circumstances pointed suspicion to him, and that suspicion when his movements that night were investigated became certainty. The prosecuting attorney tried this case with the same zest as the previous one, and made a capital point in his speech, in the description of the noble qualities of the heroic young man who had before been most unjustly tried for this crime. At this time the verdict of the jury was as unanimously against the prisoner as in Charlie's case it had been for him, and the wretched man only avoided suffering the penalty of his crime by dying in prison of injuries received in an attempt to escape.

As for Charlie and Flora, their happiness was without a cloud; and in society that winter there was no bride and bridegroom so brilliantly feted as these two who had so proved their devotion to each other.

Foot, the celebrated comedian, was talking away one evening at the dinner table of a man of rank, when at the point of one of the best stories one of the party interrupted him suddenly, with an air of most considerate apology, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Foot, but your handkerchief is half out of your pocket."

"Thank you, sir," said Foot, replacing it; "you know the company better than I do," and finished his joke.

Quin was at a small dinner-party. There was a delicious pudding, of which the master of the house begged him to partake. A gentleman had just before helped himself to an immense piece of it. "Pray," said Quin, looking first at the gentleman's plate and then at the dish, "which is the pudding?"

Unspotted old Roari says that love is a combination of disease—an affection of the heart, and an inflammation of the brain.

KAY WEEDS AND MAY FLOWERS.

The clouds that wait around the sun
Are prodigal and gay;
The only snow that winter's left
Is blooming on the May.

See how the blossom quivers now,
Stirred by the thrush's wing!
No, 'tis the new-born butterfly—
For lo! the flower takes wing.

The purple-veined poppies
Among the noxious grass;
And round the bushy thorny chains
Blossoms bow the kindly rose.

The pimpernel in warning spreads
Its red-lavender banner;
And round the ivy's smoky stem
The roots grow thick as fur.

The poppy shakes its sickle head
In mockery of the corn;
The cynic thistle spreads its spikes
With an acerbic scorn.

The bindweed, like a vagrant vine,
Though barren, loves to stray,
And clings with problem's embrace
To boughs that break away.

The daisies speckle white the turf;
The cowslips in the grass
Stretch fairy cups of gold to give
To beggars as they pass.

The birds, the heralds of the year,
Sing each a different tune,
Yet all unite and welcome in
That stately monarch—JUNE.

THEO LEIGH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DONNE," &c.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THEO LEIGH'S LOSS.

The arrangements were all perfected in that little house at Hampstead. The place was very habitable, and would have been notwithstanding very dull to dwell in, had not hope perpetually told a flattering tale to Theo. This region, that was rather bleak, truth to tell, in this autumn weather, in which she knew no one (for the beautiful metropolitan custom of fighting shy of, and greatly distrusting, all new arrivals, holds good in the suburbs); this region, I say, would have been dull and unendurable to her, had she looked upon it as other than a waiting-place on her road to the joyous goal that was before her.

To those of my readers who hold that the "first" is the only true love, the statement that Theo Leigh loved Frank Burgoyne very fondly, very warmly, very well, will seem either wrong or ridiculous? Nevertheless it is a fact, that she did so love him, ay, though she had no more utterly forgotten Harold French than one human being can utterly forget another who has been near and dear, and much spoken about.

She did not utterly forget Harold French. She was neither weak-minded, nor false-hearted. She did not forget Harold French; but, remembering him only made her think the more fondly and constantly of Frank Burgoyne—of the man who was aware of her youthful weakness, and who loved her in spite of it.

Hampstead was out of the way, was inaccessible from the Frank Burgoyne starting-point clearly. At least she tried to think that it was Hampstead's inaccessibility alone which made Frank keep away so much.

They were dull days, if the truth be told—those earlier days of Theo Leigh's residence in the little house on the Heath, the sitting up of which she had superintended with much weariness of spirit. They were dull days, very dull days; but then you see she had such bright things in store.

In the meantime, before these bright things were realized, she tried hardly to get back all those outward and visible signs of youth and happiness which had been bruised and banished. Frank Burgoyne's bride should go to him with roses on her cheeks, and brightness in her eyes, and the rich dew of health on her lips. So Theo went out bravely on that broad Heath whereon she felt so friendly, and sought for these fitting adornments round about the region of Jack Straw's Castle and the Spaniards; sought for and found them, too, and rejoiced over her renovation with a girl's natural vanity.

Life went at a very sober pace in that little house on the Heath. The greatest excitement ever got up within its walls was on the rare occasions of Theo's confidentially expecting Frank, and making preparations towards his advent—which seldom took place. She did not make preparations after the manner of her estimable aunt, Mrs. Vaughan. She did not bustle and fuss furiously, and endeavor to keep the fact of doing these things in the background. She brought all her preparations, and all the joy she had in making them, forward frankly; she revelled in displaying them, and the grace with which they were made, to Frank, their good and proper cause.

With the exception of these occasions, life was very monotonous in Theo's home. That old hearty communion that had never failed, that had always been so pleasant to all else be miserable as it might—this was a thing of the past. The strangest thing in her strange home was the want of her father's presence, and her father's friendship. The saddest thing in it was the thought that her father could never rejoice in her achievement of that destiny, the mere promise of which had been so prized by him. She grieved the joy he would have had in her triumphs by the proud trustful love she bore him, and I think the grief was a true one.

For all this, though, the girl was very happy. She was only a woman, and the prospect of being a titled one was not unpleasant to her. Besides, as I have said before, she loved Frank for that generosity of his which made him apparently utterly ignore all that had gone before. She loved him with a hearty grateful love, than which there could be nothing better or more complete.

In the earlier days of their engagement it had been settled that she should be married in August. But her father's death had intervened, and from that other delaying cause had sprung. So that now, though it was late in September, she was still Miss Leigh, and still uncertain of how long she was to remain Miss Leigh.

Nevertheless, though her marriage was thus

indefinitely deferred, she looked upon it as a thing that would in the order of events come off very soon. Accordingly, being only fresh and blood of the middle class, she felt it behooved her to see about the buying and making of the purple and blue linen usual on such occasions. Moreover, being only of the middle class, as has been said before, she gave much thought to the matter. Travelled ardently outward and home, more than one occasion, beguiled by an advertisement setting forth in large letters, with many notes of admiration appended thereto, the miserable case that was on certain firms of being cleared out, no matter how alarming the sacrifice, before a certain date.

Poor Theo! There was no one to do it for her, gentle Mrs. Leigh having subsided into nothingness. There was no one to do it for her, and it had to be done; consequently Theo did it herself. It was not pleasant for the girl who had never been about in the world before, to be abroad on her own responsibility now, bargaining with extortionate tradesmen, and seeing calico, who were lame when she entered their equipages, develop into roaring lions when she got out, and mildly and tremulously questioned the justice of the eightpences they put on her Hampstead Hill.

It was not pleasant for her to do these things. It was not pleasant that the future Lady Leighton should have done them. But unfortunately the prospect of being Lady Leighton did not fill her purse; and with this deuced generation the prospect of matrimony, and the most profound belief in good things being in store for one, go for nothing if the purse be empty. Accordingly Theo did things that were neither quite pleasant nor quite comely—did them and suffered for them, as people do and suffer in this everyday commonplace world in which we everyday commonplace ones do dwell.

An obliging uncle had died when Theo was three years old, leaving her a small legacy—a sum of £150, into possession of which she was to come when she was either married or had attained the age of twenty-one. She was twenty-one now, and she was about to fulfil the other condition. Consequently the money was hers.

The money was hers to do as she pleased with; and when it was first given over to her in the shape of a bundle of semi-transparent notes that crinkled under her hand, reminding her of the well-cooked skin of pork—when it was first given over in this wealthy-sounding way, she deemed it an all-sufficient, not to say fabulous, sum. But after a day or two it dwindled.

It dwindled in a surprising, not to say a shocking way, after the manner of money. Now the manner of money was new to Theo, and that way it had, of going fast and leaving no trace behind, was quite a new feature in finance to her. It was startling at first to find how small the amount of change was out of a five-pound note, when the price of the article to be paid for was four pounds nineteen and sixpence. This was very startling at first; but she got used to it after a time, and pocketed her sixpence with gratitude.

Aunt Libby had undertaken to give her the dress of dresses—the bridal robe and veil, and Aunt Libby's ideas on the subject of these things were of the most enlarged order.

"You may go to a guinea a yard, my dear," the old lady had said to her niece, when the anxious engagement with the hair of Maddington was first made known to her. Accordingly Theo "went to a guinea a yard," and ordered home what she deemed a sufficient quantity of a white material with forked lightning and splashes like his tears upon it, known to the initiated as "antique antique, best quality."

There was great pleasure in getting these dresses; great pleasure in marvelling how she would look in them—or rather, how Frank would think she looked in them. The solitary little figure in black grew very bright within as she toiled about from shop to shop; the girl with so little money to spend in reality, spent it with a joyous lavishness over such things as misled the sellers of the same with the notion that the stock of crisp notes was large. But it was such solitary pleasure! She went about this pleasant task that had fallen to her share yet in the world, alone!

Alone, quite alone! It was very improper, of course; and not at all the sort of thing that those parents who have the where-withal to mount outward guard over their daughters can credit is ever done by gentlemen. It is very improper; but all must allow that it is one of those improprieties which are not committed by preference. On the whole, Theo would rather have rolled about in a snug brougham, and had an intelligent footman follow her out of the shops with the packages.

However, she had no brougham and no footman, so perforce she was compelled either to walk upon the earth or to take a cab in her journeyings hither and thither, or (more terrible still) to get into one of those dismal swamps—an omnibus.

One day, after a severe morning of purchasing, and feeling guilty of extravagance, and yet being sure she could not do without the things, after many hours of disturbance of spirit, she had practised a small economy, and gone down from the select region of West End shops to Hampstead in an omnibus. At the foot of the hill her spirit of endurance broke down, and she crept out in the lame dilapidated way in which people do creep out of an omnibus after a lengthened indulgence in its delights—crept out, resolving to walk up the hill home, and so freshen herself for that visit from Frank which she confidently expected that evening.

That hill! That terror and trial to the tired legs of man or beast. It is a hill to be thought of with the darkest hatred, if you have ever attempted to drive a lazy, self-willed, fatigued horse up it. A sanguine feeling is yours at the foot of it, perhaps. You imagine that your skillful hand will administer a flick on that precise portion of the quadruped you are driving which will ensure his pulling up well at once. You try the skillful flick, and it has just no effect whatever. He flaps, and the traces slacken, and his head goes down, and so do your hopes, and pedestrians pass you, and time grows weary and you grow old, and still that hill stretches its miserable length before you. You can't hit your horse as it is in your usual kind heart to his him, or you would be had up under Mr. Martin's act. You don't like to whip and gnash your teeth for fear of being seized and immured by some myrmidon from lunatic asylum. One may make ghostly efforts to while away the time by making intelligent remarks to one's companion, but this is a miserable device for the concealment of anxious misery, and is warranted to fail. It does not even impose upon oneself—the most easily deceived of all one's acquaintances. The only thing to be

done is to meekly resign oneself to melancholy, or to pretend to be looking for Clarkson Road, St. John's House.

Up this hill Theo Leigh walked on a clear September afternoon, with the double conviction on her mind that Frank would come and cheer her up in the evening, and that she had spent nearly all her money, and would have to have to encroach upon that magnificent sum which Government awarded her mamma as compensation for the loss of a husband. "I must have a lot to start with," Theo thought; "and I had better get them all dark, though Frank unfortunately only likes me to wear lemon-color and silver-gray. I'll write to Sydney, and ask her to get me a lot at the place she gets her frocks—at wholesale price, I think she says—and I had better fix a day for her to come over and stay with me."

She quickened her pace as she said this, in order to get home, and write, and secure a letter to be posted before five o'clock. As she passed up the last bend of the hill she heard her name spoken in a voice that she knew well and remembered kindly, and looking up she saw Mr. French.

She saw him such an altered man, such a grey-haired elderly man, that the blood leapt into her face with surprise. Great as was the inward alteration which had been wrought in himself during the last few months, the outward alteration in this man was still greater; and in the outward alteration that we are apt to mark and lament.

There is no confusion in her soul now, constraint in her mind at this abrupt meeting with recognition of him. Once quickly there was no confusion or constraint in her manner.

"I am very glad to see you again, Mr. French," she said, forgetting Frank's recently avowed feelings on the subject. "I am very glad to see you again; but—have you been ill?"

Something seemed to jar upon her heart as she spoke. It was a cordial, kind, long-lingering greeting, that which she awarded him. It should in honor have been no more than three things. Nevertheless it jarred upon him that it was no more.

"No, I have not been ill," he replied; "but I have been worried and anxious during the last few hours."

"Won't you come back and see mamma?" she asked. "We live near here."

"I know—I have just seen Mrs. Leigh," he replied hurriedly; "the fact is, I came up from Maddington this morning; Lord Leighton is much worse, and wants his grandson."

"Is Frank gone down?" Theo asked quickly.

"No; we telegraphed for him, and no notice was taken, so I came up; he has not been at his place for a day or two, and I fancied he might be here, therefore I took the liberty of calling at your house."

He attempted to say this in a stiff conventional tone. Theo, in her frank indifference to him, and through her equally frank display of interest for Mr. Burgoyne, seemed so very far removed from him.

She marked his tone, and fathomed the spirit that dictated it. "Ah! don't speak to me in that way," she cried, "but tell me what you will do about seeing Frank; I can't say where he is."

"I have left a note at his room," he replied.

"And is Lord Leighton really ill—dying?" "I fear he is."

"Poor Frank! How he'll feel if he should be too late to see his grandfather," she said, earnestly. "I had fancied that he was at Maddington, as I haven't seen him for several days."

She stopped, blushing, as the remembrance flashed across her mind that Harold French might think that Frank was neglecting her, as she herself occasionally was afraid he was. The pause and the blush told him more than the completed sentence would have done, and he felt that the one who had deprived him of this jewel was not wearing it proudly by any means. It was hard for him to walk calmly along by her side and feel this; so he stopped and said good-bye to her, and she went on quickly to her own home, with footsteps rendered fleet by the thought that she had "so much to tell Frank!"—"so much" that she now felt would not be quite pleasant to him to hear, and that would oppress her with a sense of concealment, till he had heard. "He's sure to say Mr. French interposes unnecessarily," she thought, "and to rage against poor Miss Burgoyne for having despatched such an envoy in search of him; anyway, I could not help meeting him on the hill."

As soon as the door of the little house was opened to her she asked,

"Is Mr. Burgoyne here?"

"No, Miss; and your ma's—"

"Are any of my things come home?" Leo interrupted.

The servant shook her head, and resumed the broken thread of her discourse.

"And your ma's up in her room, taking on about something, Miss."

"Poor mamma!" Leo thought, as she plodded wearily upstairs. All the fleetness was fled from her footsteps now that she learnt that neither of the expected arrivals were here before her.

Mrs. Leigh was sitting in an easy chair in a corner of the room, over which a shade hung, when her daughter entered.

"I'm home again, mamma, you see," Theo commenced, in bright accents. She never used the tone dolorous when people were in grief. It never improved their case one whit she had discovered; indeed, it usually had the contrary effect of plunging them into still deeper gloom.

Mrs. Leigh looked up with a start, and Theo's quick eyes read wistfulness in her mother's gaze,—such wistfulness as she had never seen in it before.

"My dear, are you very tired?"

"No, mother," Theo said, in more subdued tones than those she had first used. Then she went and knelt down by her mother's feet, and Mrs. Leigh drew the head crowned with its wavy masses of brown hair down upon her lap.

Tired! No, she was not tired; but as she felt her mother's hand press closer, trembling, amidst those waves of hair, a feeling oppressed her that was not fatigue—a feeling of desperate helplessness, a very sadness of despair. She strove to break the spell of sorrow that was creeping over her.

"Mother, poor mother, you have been alone again, and are feeling dull," she said, fondly pressing her lips upon the hand she had caught and prisoned as it wandered over her head.

"No, my dear, not dull, but—"

"Ah! you're heard the bad news from Maddington," Theo cried, with a sudden recollection of Lord Leighton's extreme case. "I

and Mr. Frank, and he told me. He wanted Frank. I hope Frank will come to-night," she continued, hopefully.

Then the dull lethargy of sorrow that had been Mrs. Leigh's portion since her husband's death dissolved suddenly, and she threw her arms about her neck, tenderly, piling, round her daughter's neck, as she sobbed out:

"Poor child! my own poor child! He will never come again!"

"Mother! Mother!"

The girl was on her feet in an instant. She had started erect with fatal suddenness, as if she had been stung.

"He is alive!" Mrs. Leigh cried eagerly. She read aright the generous anguish that was Theo Leigh's first pang. Her daughter's first thought was of death, not desertion. As I said once before, Theo Leigh never believed people to be better than they were.

"Then he has left me too," Theo wailed. "Mother, don't, don't look at me in that way. I shall not die, though I have so little to live for."

CHAPTER XLV.

LATE REMOVAL.

When Frank Burgoyne had done the deed, had spoken the few words which made manifest that which was within his vacillating heart to Sydney, he felt cast down and sorry. There was none of successful love's elation in his soul or on his brow. He knew that he had done a mean thing. He also knew that the girl for whom he had done it would no more have the power to make him feel all things to be well lost in winning her, than any other woman had had the power to hold him hereafter.

He also felt—and in feeling this there was much natural sadness—that this change he had made, which could not be completed an hour longer than Sydney's in honor, would not only damage him with his grandfather, but surely damage the latter. He would now for a certainty deem his grandson capable of all the Hugo iniquities; and Frank acknowledged to himself that he would be deemed so not altogether unjustly.

It was made patent to him at once that the letters he had himself adopted in such awkward unseemly haste would be riveted fast and sure. It was made patent to him at once that Sydney was a young lady of immense determination. It was made patent to him at once that he had been egregiously mistaken in imagining it to be feasible to play with fire without burning his fingers.

That first glimpse of his with the parent Scotts was an awful ordeal, a memorable misery. He would have given much to evade it, but his days of evading aught that Sydney desired should be ended, were over. As soon as those sensations set in to which allusion was made at the commencement of this chapter—as soon, that is, as the small excitement consequent on a verbal declaration of a change of faith, had faded away, and he began to feel cast down and sorry, he proposed "going away."

He proposed this in a half-guilty way—in a way that plainly showed that he felt his proposition would be opposed, and Sydney opposed it promptly.

"Go away! Why?" she asked. "No, Frank, do stay! See papa now; you ought to stay and see papa."

"I will write him a line to-night," he said, hesitatingly.

"That won't do at all," she replied, resolutely. "They're very particular, and they're very fond of me. Your going away won't look well to them."

"But Sydney—" he began, taking her hand earnestly.

"But Frank," she interrupted quickly, "if after all, you can't face it, how can you think of leaving me to face it alone?"

"There is nothing for you to face."

"Oh, isn't there? Oh, isn't there, indeed? Nothing for me to face? If you think so lightly of me as that, I wonder you could ask me to marry you. I have feeling; I feel very much, though I always keep up before people."

She became transparent under the eyes as she spoke, after the manner of blondest who restrain their bristly tears, and she was very fair.

"My dear Sydney, it's no question of—"

"It's just a question of straightforwardness of speaking, it seems to me," she interrupted. "Papa would think me a sneak if I kept anything from him, and I can tell you I am not going to be the one to speak of our engagement first, so you must stay."

"Our engagement!" The phrase caused him to feel how thoroughly he was "in for it" here, before he was "out of it" in another quarter.

It is hard to say which of these twin, who were to become one flesh, according to Miss Sydney's ordination, would have triumphed, had not Mr. and Mrs. Scott providentially returned at this juncture. They had timed their absence well.

As she entered the room Mrs. Scott became conscious of having that special sanguine hue over her face which bespeaks intense excitement, and it did not seem according to the fitness of things in her estimation that other than the cheer and collected side of the family should be shown to Mr. Burgoyne just yet. She therefore endeavored to explain her red cheeks away—much to Sydney's horror.

"This autumn 'twas that trying when one is weak and given to flushing, that you'd scarcely believe, Mr. Burgoyne," she said, in a voice that was far lower pitched than her natural one, in order to express that delicacy and fatigue for which the occasion called.

Frank looked at her by way of reply—looked at her distastefully, and thought, "It's very ridiculous shall see the inside of my house, if I have to marry her daughter."

"Then, mamma, go and cool yourself, do," Sydney struck in promptly, "and Frank will—won't you, Frank?"

She did not say what Frank would do. But he knew what she meant, and he said, "Yes," with external composure and an internal groan. He knew well that the aforementioned precipitate declaration of a change of faith would have to be repeated in due form to Mr. Scott, and he began to wish that he had not made it at all.

It was an ugly leap truly; but Sydney, the weaker vessel, had gone at a similar one so valiantly that he could not balk it for very shame. It was not that he feared that there would be any difficulties thrown in his way on the Scott side; on the contrary, he knew that it would all be rendered effectively easy to him, as far as they were concerned; but the shadow of that letter which would have to be written to Theo's mother who would over him already.

His mother-in-law in his estimation as regarded one thing. It was all made easy for him as far

as the Scott's were concerned; they were all that was tolerant to what was past, and most satisfyingly anxious to smooth all obstructions in the future. Mr. Scott clapped him heartily on the back, and put on the last new uniform to sit down to dinner with Frank, the engaged; for a promise to stay to dinner was wrong from him on the spot, as soon as ever he had spoken out what Mrs. Scott called "his most honorable intentions."

Sydney was the reverse of ill-natured; nevertheless she gave no very serious thought to what Theo would feel about it at all. One allusion she did make to her former friend, her worsted rival, and, odd as it may appear, it was not a disparaging one.

"It will be only fair to let Theo know of this at once, Frank; you must promise me to do that."

She paused; but as he made no answer, she resumed quickly, "If you won't promise me, I tell you I'll make my mother write to hers at once; it would be too mean to keep her in the dark."

I do not think that he liked his first evening in the bosom of the family of his affianced. They tried to absorb him too entirely into themselves; to be half-fellow-well-met with him; to be free and unembarrassed, and awfully intimate in a peculiar way. Mrs. Scott kept abruptly from the manner subject to the manner affectionate; and Mr. Scott mentioned so many things "by-the-way" to him, that he could do when he took his seat in either House, that the last state of that man was infinitely worse than the first. Moreover, Sydney's habit of putting down both her parents alternately was confusing; this was a thing to grow, he felt; he might, in time, fall under that commanding young manner, which impressed the stranger as being so very fresh and frank. He had his gentlemanly, well-bred instincts; blood always "tells" in some way or other; so, though he reminded himself that Sydney "ought not to forget what he had given up for her" (meaning the way he had risked his honors in respect to Theo Leigh), he never thought for an instant that Sydney ought to remember the great good a union with him would bring her.

He left at last, and walked up to town, revolving at his leisure the phrasing of that letter which should convey the sorry truth to Leo. "What will she think of me?" he thought. He had no fear of any outburst, any appeal. He knew the girl; he knew all her loving pride too well to dread that. But he could not reflect on what his sensations would be did she droop and fade and die of this blow he was preparing to deal her.

It was but cowardly comfort, yet he hugged it to his soul as he walked along, this gallant young English gentleman, with the full supply of courageous cavalier blood in his veins: it was but cowardly comfort, yet it was the sole one left to him,—the thought that, let what would befall her, he would probably never know the fate of Theo Leigh.

He felt thoroughly ashamed of himself. But of idleness and a habit of giving way to the impulse of the moment, the mischief had been born. This trick he had taken up of loving and unloving, of wooing and leaving! He seized to look upon it as a pretty pastime as he walked along alone; he saw it now as the gay, dull, dastardly thing it was.

Ah! that coming a thing as it is, and knowing that we have brought it on ourselves, and that there is no escape for us. "Live there a man with soul so dead" as to have taken comfort in defeat and downfall from that sorry saying, "You have no one but yourself to blame for it." There is blame in blaming the whole world for the evil that overtakes us, but not in denouncing our own blunders and misadventures. In this there is none, absolutely none—save in the case of a woman who loves the man who neglects her, and so excuses her by accusing himself.

Frank Burgoyne determined to write that letter to Theo's mother while the glow of the consciousness that was on him to write it at all was on him freshly. He thought first that he would make it very concise; but that seemed brutal. Then he thought that he would give a lengthy explanation; a summary of his own weaknesses, and of the trials to which they had been subjected. That, on reflection, seemed needlessly insulting. "By Jupiter! I don't know what to say for myself!" he said, at last, in the exasperation of his spirit. "I am a fool, a great fool! who has lost in the selfish game."

But, genuine as this statement was, powerful as it was in its simple truth, it would not do to write that, and that alone, to Theo's mother. It might be taken to have application to ever so many other things he felt, in this hour of his humiliation, and it behooved him to make his statement clear—all foul and base as it was—without needless delay.

There are many disagreeable duties to be performed in this world. Calligraphical exercises very frequently go against the grain. It is unpleasant to be compelled to write a check when your banking account is low. It is odious to write a page and a half of condolence to the bereaved with whom, in sober fact, you can't quite sympathize, having perhaps known but little, and that little but bad, of the deceased. It is not nice to be behindhand with the last chapters of a novel announced as already in the press. But more repugnant to the spirit and taste than any one of these things, is the knowledge that you yourself must write such a letter as will bruise another and blast yourself.

Such a letter Frank Burgoyne was in honor bound (such honor as was left to him) to write now. He had had previously no very overweening respect and esteem for Mrs. Leigh. He had merely regarded her as a nice, ladylike, excellent woman; but now the full force of her motherhood came upon him, and he flinched in his soul as he pictured her reading the letter which must be written.

"By Heaven! I'd rather cut my hand off than do it," he muttered, as he pulled a writing-table towards him after an hour's solitary reflection in the sitting-room he occupied at the hotel. Cutting his hand off, however, would have been a futile proceeding, void of all power to further those arrangements which he dared not suffer to stand still. Therefore he took up a pen instead, and wrote that letter, the contents of which came down upon Theo as a thunderbolt when she returned from her weary day's shopping.

It was a very lame performance. Looking back upon it in after years, when the bloom of time was upon it, he was fain to confess that it was a very lame performance indeed, yet he said all that there was to say—all that he dared to say.

When he rose from the writing, when he had directed and sealed his letter, he felt that, come

what would of passion, of soberer love, of joy in that love, and security in it, there would be a dimming shade cast over all by memory. He would never be quite to himself even what he had been before. The vagueness that would be over Theo Leigh's fate, to him would be a depressing thing, or should that vagueness be dispersed, there might arise a more agonizing certainty.

"Girls don't die of broken hearts in these days, thank the Lord!" he said to himself after a time. But the very fact of his thanking the Lord that the probability was averted, proved that he feared the possibility of its arising. He was very miserable and very cast-down, and later in the night he could but think of how all this would tell upon his prospects at Maddington. The title would be his for a surety, but there was a lot of unsettled property.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Detection of Burglars.

An English writer suggests a contrivance for the better security of property, and by which a burglar might be detected, from which a clever man might develop something better. He proposes a common gas lamp, provided with a red shade, similar to those used on the railroads, should be suspended in the street in front of the bank or shop where valuable articles are kept: the red shade should be held up above the lamp by a magnet, worked by a small electric battery, situated at any convenient place on the premises; the wire from the battery to the magnet should pass through the safe-doors and drawers containing valuable articles; and as long as the connection is complete between the battery and the magnet, the red shade would be held up in its place above the lamp, showing a white light; but as soon as the connection was broken by opening any of the doors or cases, the magnet would immediately lose its power, and allow the shade to fall in front of the lamp, thus showing a red light, and giving notice to any one in the street that something was wrong inside; and when once the shade had fallen, it could not be replaced by the burglar. These magnets are very simple, being made of a piece of soft iron, bent in the form of a horse-shoe, with a coil of copper wire round the ends; and the cost of working the battery would be a trifle.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.—The Atlantic Monthly for June contains articles from Gail Hamilton, I. K. Marvel, Elizabeth Akers, George Bancroft, Rose Terry, John Weiss, Mrs. H. B. Stowe, Annie M. Brewster, and several others. It has quite a pastoral tincture this month, as witness Gail Hamilton's article on chickens, and Rose Terry's on cows. The former writes in the same lively, trenchant manner on chickens, as she does on men and women. In the course of her "Prose Henriad," she says: "It is said in the country, that if you write a polite letter to rate, asking them to go away, they will go. I received my information from one who had tried the experiment, or known it to be tried with great success. Standing ready always to write a letter on the smallest provocation, you may be sure I did not neglect so good an opportunity. The letter acknowledged their skill and sagacity, applauded their valor and their perseverance, but stated that, in the present scarcity of labor, the resident family were not able to provide more supplies than were necessary for their own immediate use and for that of our brave soldiers, and they must therefore beg the Messrs. Rate to leave their country for their country's good. It was laid on the potato chest, and I have never seen a rat since!"

MURAL TABLET TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN.—The Cincinnati Gazette says the custom of erecting tablets in the walls of churches and public edifices, though fallen into disuse, is worthy of revival, and there are indications that it will be revived. One of these indications is the fact that such a tablet has just been erected to the memory of our late departed President, in the church at College Hill. It is the result of an enterprise conceived and carried out by four young ladies—Masters Eddy Brooks, Willie Miller, Bryan Tuckerman, and Joshua Piersen. It is of white and black marble, and bears the following inscription:—

Abraham Lincoln,
Our Martyred President,
April 15, 1865.
The Children's Memorial.

PULPIT PROPERTY.—It would be prudent for the "watchers on the walls of Zion" to guard young aspirants for pulpit fame against bringing ridicule upon the sacred cause by efforts at singularity.

A clerical student who had won the title of "the exhorter," from the power with which he urged salvation upon sinners, was particularly fond of using striking expressions. During a revival he hit upon the following petition:—"O, Lord, grant to send down Thy ink-born and mark every sinner in this assembly."

R. E. LEE, late General, will soon leave Richmond and repair to his farm, situated near the White House, on the Pamunkey river, to spend the remainder of his days in agriculture—if unmolested by the Government. His son, Custis Lee, is already on the farm allotted to, and is doing his ploughing in person.

An English marriage-party lately had a time of it in London. They went to the church, found it closed, and after getting the keys had to force the vestry door, when they had neither surplusage, books, or register. A sheet was borrowed in which the minister was pinned, and while waiting for a messenger to return with the register, the party amused themselves by ringing the three bells on the church, all of which so disgusted the regular vicar, who did not marry them, that he assigned a solemn service for Friday, March 24th, to avert the wrath of Almighty God, and to deprecate his righteous judgments, in consequence of the profanation of his sanctuary on Monday last. Divine service will commence at 1.30 P. M. Ezekiel, v. 11.—Alfred Pownall, vicar.

THE MISTRESS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.—It has been supposed that the position of mistress of the White House would be assumed by Mrs. Stover, the daughter of President Johnson, in consequence of the ill health of Mrs. Johnson. A Knoxville correspondent says that she recently left that place for Greenville, where she will probably remain during the summer, as the loss of her husband, who was killed in the battle of Nashville, last fall, unfit her for the strain and excitement of life at the White House.

Why are books the best friends? Because when they have you, you can always shut them up without offence.

Cow Criticisms.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY VERNET THE SKETCHER.

Several years since, when I lived up in the Georgia cattle country, my next neighbor on one side was Mrs. Conness, whose business specialty was stock raising. The widow owned eight hundred acres of land in two plantations, joining, held across a great many head of horned cattle—not a third so many as the two places might have supported with judicious management—sold a great many every year, and was making money faster than any cotton planter in the state.

But the widow had never been quite so fortunate as she ought to have been considering the price she paid in the selections of her managers. Fifteen hundred dollars a year, with the usual Southern privileges, ought to have procured a great deal better overseer than ever fell to Mrs. Conness's lot. She knew that herself, and I had often heard her declare that she would not begrudge, and would freely give two thousand dollars per annum for the services of such a man as she needed. She did not seem likely to find him, however, as year after year went by, and every year an overseer went and came as "Castlewood."

One morning, in February, I think it was—pretty cool for south Georgia, I happened to be in Mrs. Conness's home barn-yard, close by the mansion, where she had at the time a dozen perhaps of her pet cows—all remarkably fine animals for natives—the widow believed nothing in imported or "grade" stock.

Mrs. Conness was in the yard, and while we were discussing the merits of some of her pets, there came in a Northerner from Vermont—a young man on the boy side of thirty—named Birney, a wheelwright, agricultural implement maker, and a clever mechanic at a good many more trades—a regular universal Yankee, who had taken a long stretch from the Green Mountains to far down South, settled down and set up among us with his wife and two children, arguing that he guessed he could do better down with us plantations, who always had a power of tools and things to make and mend up than he could "law hum."

And therein Josiah Birney was right. We had long needed just such a Yankee in our locality, and we patronized and paid him to his entire satisfaction. The whole region for a circuit of twenty miles knew that "Sliah Birney was a capital mechanic and always reliable, and that was about all we did know about him, for 'Sliah was always too much hurried with work to run both much, and we always sent the "boys" to carry and bring home our work—so we didn't see him very often.

Josiah Birney had come over that morning to purchase a cow. He told the widow that, and was informed that she had about forty to sell, and after that the bargaining went on about as follows:—

"What is your price for the best cows you have, madam?"

"Well, Mr. Birney—I declare I don't know. 'Bose I shall have to ask thirty dollars for the real best cows I've got."

"Well, Mrs. Conness, as I only keep one, I want the best I can get."

The widow pointed to a magnificent animal. A fine, large, bright red cow, with beautiful horns, a white star in her forehead, two white feet, an immense bag, coming six years old that spring, within a week of calving, and bearing every popular mark of a famous milker.

"That, Mr. Birney, that's a real beauty. That cow 'll just suit you."

"No, I beg your pardon, madam. That cow will not suit me at all, Mrs. Conness. I am a poor man, and my cow must be able to see her way, and help to pick her own living part of the time."

"Why, honey! Who in the world ever told you that at cow's blind?"

"No, madam. Never knew you had such a cow till I came in the yard here a few minutes ago."

"Well, I declare! Why no one else ever said that afore so quick. Did you know the cow was blind, Mr. Vernet?"

"No, ma'am, I confess I did not, and I have seen her fifty times I think."

"Well, somebody has to be the first to see everything," remarked Birney, carelessly.

Mrs. Conness pointed out next a medium-sized, handsome brindle, having all the qualifications I should have said of a first-class cow.

"Well, neighbor, that's a cow for you. She ain't blind. Take that brindle."

"Not this time, Mrs. Conness. New Jerusalem! That brindle cow would kick me clean out of Georgia in three days."

"Look here, honey—is you an angel?"

"Not quite, ma'am; if I was, I shouldn't need to be hunting round after a cow!"

"Well, stranger, that ar brindle does kick like all the world; but I can't yet understand it, honey, how you got to know it the first time you ever seed the critter."

"That's the proper time to see the faults of either cows or 'celics,' ma'am; before we get 'em stuck on to us, so that we can't get 'em off again."

"Well I say. What funny folks you Northerners people is. Now that's a cow you can't complain of, Mr. Birney." The widow showed 'Sliah, a famous great black "muley," with white face and line along her back, and a prodigious bag. "That, honey. That's a critter that ain't blind, nor won't kick."

"No, ma'am, nor eat either—unless you feed her on mush or short-cake. I never heard tell of putting a set of teeth in a cow; don't believe it can be done."

"Why, bless de good Lord, honey! I believe you is a witch. That ar cow haint got no teeth, that's sartin. But I don't see how you can find that out on no time 'most."

The next offer was decidedly the handsomest animal in the yard. A fine-built, red and white animal, just in her prime. I would have taken her at five dollars advance, in preference to any other cow in the yard. The Yankee mechanic laughed, shook his head, and objected:

"O no, thank ye, ma'am. I can't afford to keep a cow that goes dry four months before calving time."

"For the Lord! Mr. Birney, I most believe you is the real old devil himself."

"O no, Mrs. Conness. The devil can't keep cows on his plantation. Too hot there. 'Twould dry up the best cow in Georgia in fifteen minutes. Now, Mrs. Conness, I want a cow—a good one; and if you'll let me have my choice out of that lot, I'll give you forty dollars for her."

"Why, bless the good Lord, honey! that

ain't no critter down thar of no account as her."

"Well, I'll take the risk. Here's the forty dollars."

"Well, I declare—that beats all! I never seed anything like that ar. But, honey, if ever you seed another, bring the critter back and take another choice, or I'll give you your money again. I want to be fair."

So we adjourned to the field, and from a lot of fifty animals, from inferior looking to fine, 'Sliah selected a little red crumpled-horned, three-year-old, that, as I live, I wouldn't have given fifteen dollars for. Mrs. Conness and I advised and remonstrated, but the Yankee was stubborn, and drove off his purchase in spite of us.

In ten days from that morning, seventy-five dollars wouldn't have purchased that holder of Josiah Birney; and in one month from that day the Yankee wheelwright was stock-advisor-general to the Widow Conness, at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year, and the privilege of devoting three-quarters of his time to his trade. That man knew Cows, if ever a man did.

One day, about three months after, that barn-yard fiasco, I said to the stock-general:

"Birney, how did you know that cow was blind?"

"She punched her nose against the sticks of the rack more than half the time, instead of steering straight in between 'em, as a cow that could see would do."

"How about the kicker?"

"Oh! that was plain. First I saw the skin knocked off her hind feet pretty badly; and then she rolled her eyes, and shivered in her hind-quarters, whenever one of the other cows happened to come near her. A kicking animal always does that."

"Well—about the toothless one?"

"Ha! ha! ha! Just like an old granny—mumbled a lock of nice clover round in her mouth as many as three minutes, and then let it fall out. She couldn't eat it, sir—I could see that."

"Yes—but how could you see that the spotted cow went dry so long before calving?"

"Why, by the lactical ducts—what dairymen call the milk-veins, Mr. Vernet. Instead of being well in under the belly, and undivided, they lay far out on the side, and branched all out, towards the udder. A bad sign, sir, always."

I learned by after experience that Josiah Birney's cow criticisms were just.

A STRIDE IN THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION.

At the time of the discovery of this continent by Columbus, Mexico was inhabited by a semi-civilized people, with large and populous cities, with an organized monarchical government and settled civil policy, with rights of real and personal property fully defined, with a division of labor among masons, weavers, goldsmiths, painters, and other artisans, and, finally, with the art of picture writing. In Peru was a similar monarchy, in which the vast stores of grain and the excellence of the roads excited the wonder of the Spanish conquerors. And yet these two great communities, though living in such close neighborhood, were wholly ignorant of each other's existence! Now the work is being pushed rapidly forward of constructing a telegraph cable around the world, when the three continents of Europe, Asia and America will be in instantaneous communication with each other.

The highest price ever paid for a printed volume, was for Boccaccio's Decamerone, at the sale of the Duke of Roxburgh's library, in London, in 1812. This celebrated volume was printed by Christopher Valart, in 1471. The principal competitors at the sale were the Marquis of Blandford and Earl Spencer. The former carried off the prize. He bid £2,360—more than ten thousand dollars in gold!

George Augustus Sala, in a letter from Paris, says:—"The latest French bonnet is like Hudibras' story of the bear and the fiddle—began and broke off in the middle. It is a magnificent but incomplete work, like Buckle's History of Civilization, or like Don Juan. For ornaments the run is upon steel. The quantity of minute marine stores worn by the fair ladies of France is astounding. After steel comes straw. The ladies appear to have unplaited their old straw bonnets and stuck them all over their dresses. A mantle or jacket beset with real straw in fantastic devices is much patronized, and imitation straw for fringe is becoming universal. Finally, crinolines seem to be really going out, and the robes a queue, or long trains are coming in. The latest and artful plan is to have a petticoat of the same shape as the robe, brief in front and elongated behind; and the dress is looped up in front to show the boots, and it is to be presumed, to prevent the fair wearer tripping herself up every second pace or so."

The Empress Eugenie made up her royal mind that her young cousin, the Princess Clotilde, must not wear so much plink. She therefore sent, as a present, three of the most exquisite hats ever conceived in Parisian brain, devoid of the obnoxious color, which the independent Princess forthwith returned, without thanks or comment, and at the very next good opportunity appeared attired from bonnet to dress in colour de rose.

A small locomotive, water-tank and all, weighing but 200 pounds, was lately tried near London. It was managed by a boy eight years old, who had it under perfect control, and stopped it in its length on request. The power was half a horse. The cost for fuel was under one half-penny per hour.

It has been discovered that Shakespeare received but £5 for "Hamlet." The best first plays in his time brought a little over £50 to their authors. Boccaccio made over £60,000 from his "Colleen Bawn."

A REBEL COLONEL ON THE REBEL. "BLICK HOLE."—Col. Hatch, one of the rebel commissioners of exchange of prisoners, is now in Libby Prison. Just after his imprisonment he sent for General Melford, our commissioner of exchange, and asked:

"Do you think it is proper treatment for me?"

"What is the matter?" inquired Melford.

"Don't you see," replied Hatch, with profane emphasis, "that there is not a pane of glass in these windows?"

"Oh, is that all?" answered Melford. "Why Hatch, I have been telling you for the last two years there was not a pane of glass in these windows."

By a recent decision of the New York Superior Court, a wife who lives apart voluntarily from her husband cannot force him to maintain her. She must go to him and demand a home. If he does not give it she can obtain alimony, but not otherwise.

the fibres of steel all with their ends in the direction of the cut, and treble the duration of cutting capacity.

Miscellaneous Enigma.

Gill Bates's, same date:—2.16 sec.—J. M. Greenwood and G. B.

X's, same date:—2, 12, and 24—2, 4, and 8—J. M. Greenwood. Author's answer—2, 4, and 8—2, 4, and 8.